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AUTHOR	Conzemius, Anne; Sandrock, Paul
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ABSTRACT

The TEACH Grant--Foreign Language in Elementary Schools (FLES) project assisted six Wisconsin elementary schools in developing and delivering unique model programs demonstrating the innovative use of a variety of technologies to support foreign language teaching and learning. The project involved a collaboration between the Wisconsin TEACH Board and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Implementation occurred over 1 year. This report addresses the structural, systematic, programmatic, instructional, and logistic characteristics of the individual project sites and provides a summative evaluation across the sites. Evaluation involved site visits, surveys, phone conferences/interviews, and emails. A key factor in increasing language was regular and frequent instruction. The language taught did not show significant differences in how students performed. A holistic, immersion approach was very effective. The presence of the classroom teacher as learner, mentor, and support person made a difference. Distance learning provided opportunities for students to learn a foreign language where there might not have otherwise been any foreign language experiences. However, the optimal learning situation involved the physical presence of a skillful, caring teacher. (SM)

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Developing World Language Programs in Elementary Grades

FROM VISION TO REALITY

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FROM VISION TO REALITY

DEVELOPING WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IN ELEMENTARY GRADES:

LESSONS LEARNED

REPORT TO TEACH WISCONSIN

ANNE CONZEMIUS
QUALITY LEADERSHIP BY DESIGN
PAUL SANDROCK
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
MARCH 2003

FROM VISION TO REALITY

TEACH GRANTS – FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (FLES)

Final Report

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FROM VISION TO REALITY

TEACH GRANTS - FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (FLES)

Final Report

I. INTRODUCTION

An interesting paradox is shaping the educational experience of our youth today. As our world becomes bigger (i.e., children are exposed to a global perspective through the study of diverse cultures, languages, mores, and geographies) it is simultaneously becoming smaller (i.e., technologies have made global communications instantaneous and intimate). The emergence of this new world view underscores the importance of educational programming that addresses both aspects of the phenomenon. By linking the learning of world languages, cultures, and communities with innovative uses of technology, teachers can create real-world experiences for their students that are both practical and timely. This link of globalism and technology not only mirrors the real world but can provide a model of effective teaching and learning generally. That is the aim of this project.

The TEACH Grant – Foreign Language in Elementary Schools (FLES) project was designed to assist a small number of Wisconsin elementary schools to develop and deliver model programs that demonstrate the innovative use of a variety of technologies to support teaching and learning of foreign languages. The project is the result of a collaborative partnership between the Wisconsin TEACH Board and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The intents of the grant are that funded projects:

- be innovative in terms of design, delivery and use of distance learning and/or other educational technologies to support the instruction of foreign languages, using technology for:
  - instructional delivery;
  - use by students to practice and learn foreign language skills;
  - expansion of the content through access to new resources;
  - linking Wisconsin's schools to classrooms abroad, and/or professional development;
  - enhance and/or add grade level(s) to an established foreign language program at the elementary and/or middle school levels;

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- show evidence of a continuity of instruction and progress through to the end of the high school level program;
- demonstrate ability to provide a pilot model that promotes a systemic approach to teaching foreign languages in elementary and middle schools (K-6) through the use of educational technology for instructional delivery and/or content support, and allows for dissemination and/or replication in other schools; and
- show evidence of sustainability in funding, practice and growth beyond the duration of the grant (TEACH).

Six projects were selected and funded, each proposing a unique and distinct approach. Implementation occurred over the course of a single year, although, as noted above, sustainability of the programs beyond their initial implementation was an important intent of the overall project.

The evaluation component of this project highlights lessons learned in light of research and best practices in both the teaching of foreign languages at the elementary level and in the effective use of technologies to support teaching and learning. This report will address the structural, systemic, programmatic, instructional, and logistic characteristics of the individual project sites as well as provide a summative evaluation across the sites. The lessons learned across the entire spectrum of approaches should provide a broader and deeper understanding of what is needed to support and sustain elementary foreign language programs that use educational technology as a key part of their delivery systems.

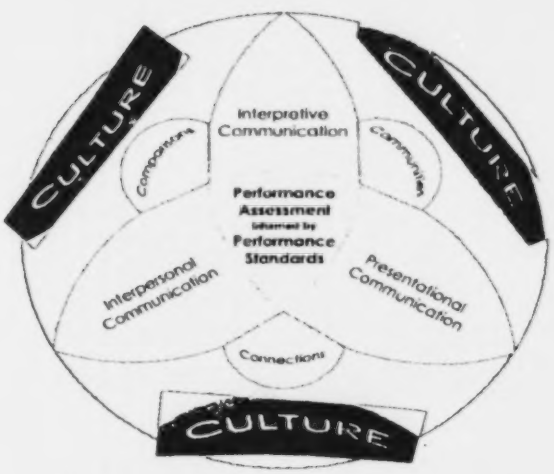
II. OVERVIEW OF THE FLES PROJECT: Context and Considerations

The undertaking of any single portion of this project is in itself a significant challenge. When combining all three – the use of new and emerging technologies, with the study of foreign languages, with students in elementary schools where foreign languages have not typically been taught – the challenges might be considered insurmountable. To provide a context for the very difficult work that the project participants have undertaken, it seems prudent to turn to what is already known about the challenges and pitfalls of each.

Curriculum:

First, in addition to knowing what generally constitutes good teaching practices at the elementary level, providing a quality foreign language program to elementary students requires a knowledge base and skill set that is unique in the field. Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Foreign Languages cover the full spectrum of a curriculum for language learning including:

- Communication (interpersonal, interpretive and presentational)
- Culture (embedded in instruction)
- Connections (to general elementary curricula in all subject areas)
- Comparisons (with one's own language and culture) and
- Communities (beyond one's classroom)
  (Sandrock)



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Concepts, vocabulary, skills and knowledge that are being taught at any given grade level form the basis for what is taught and reinforced as a part of the child's foreign language learning.

The expectation of grant participants is that if curriculum doesn't exist (which is the case in most elementary schools where foreign languages have never been taught) it needs to be created based on the above named standards. Additionally, the new curriculum needs to be connected to the regular content being offered in the child's classroom. In other words, the concepts, vocabulary, skills and knowledge that are being taught at any given grade level form the basis for what is taught and reinforced as a part of the child's foreign language learning experience. Finding the time to collaborate and plan with multiple teachers at multiple grade levels is a challenge to which all teachers can relate.

Issues:

In addition to the curricular aspects, there are instructional and programmatic considerations for implementing foreign language programs at the elementary level. Helena Curtain, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee identified nine pitfalls that research has shown commonly derail sustained implementation of programs in elementary schools. They are:

- Scheduling foreign language classes too infrequently or in sessions that are too short;
- Treating foreign languages differently from other academic subjects;
- Offering only commonly taught languages, without considering other important world languages;
- Implementing a new program in all grades at the same time;
- Ignoring the needs of students who enter the program in later grades;
- Failing to plan for appropriate articulation from elementary to secondary school programs;
- Hiring teachers who do not have both language and teaching skills;
- Planning and scheduling the foreign language program in isolation from the general curriculum; and
- Planning schedules and workloads that lead to teacher burnout. (Curtain and Pesola Dahlberg)

Key Decisions:

These pitfalls provide an important reference for planning and decision-making when it comes to designing a quality language learning program. As a way to assist participants to avoid these pitfalls, a set of questions and guidelines was provided for their consideration in the early planning stages. They include:

- Do we want to offer a program to **all** or **some** students? Will the program be required of **or** available to students?
- What are our goals for the program – for students to become increasingly proficient in **using** the language or do we really have a Social Studies goal focused on learning **about** languages and cultures?
- At what grade level can we begin and still sustain the program with quality through 12th grade?
- Is the content connected to the grade level curriculum and balanced with language and culture goals vs. separate and isolated?
- Is instruction scheduled at least three times per week? Does it continue all year vs. are there long lapses between classes? Is instruction spread too far apart (once a week all year **or** daily for just six weeks?)
- Do students continue to learn the language from grade to grade vs. are there gaps during which no language instruction is available?
- Do the same goals continue to be developed throughout the program vs. do some grades focus only on cultures, some focus on speaking, and others focus on grammar?
- Is there a careful balance of the district's language offerings? Are there several world languages being considered vs. was only one of the district's language options selected for the first experience (elementary or middle school)?

Is the content connected to the grade level curriculum and balanced with language and culture goals?

Role of Technology:

Finally, the technological challenges associated with this project must be considered. For many elementary schools in Wisconsin, the instructional use of technology is in its infancy. Whether it is distance learning, Web-based research, digital imagery or hand-held devices, their use as instructional tools is neither wide spread nor frequent. Thus, both the teachers and the students are likely to experience a steep learning curve associated with the technologies they have chosen to use. These technologies may also be new to the school itself,

presenting challenges in terms of logistics, infrastructure and technical support.

These known challenges served as the basis for the technical assistance and evaluation processes that were conducted throughout this past year. It was the goal of the TEACH Board and the DPI that the participating model programs would learn important strategies for addressing these challenges and would share their learning statewide so as to accelerate the effective implementation of future programs on a much broader basis.

III. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND EVALUATION PROCESS

In an effort to provide ongoing support and guidance to the implementation of the six FLES projects, a Support and Evaluation Team was formed. It included Connie Knop, Professor Emeritus of foreign Language Education, University of Wisconsin – Madison; Paul Sandrock, World Languages Education Consultant, Wisconsin DPI; Gordon Hanson, IT Management Consultant, TEACH Wisconsin; Helena Curtain, Assistant Professor, Curriculum & Instruction, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee; Jody Schneider, French teacher, K-8, The Woodlands School, Milwaukee; Vince Padilla, Evaluation Specialist, Padilla Associates; and Anne Conzemius, Evaluation Consultant, Quality Leadership by Design.

Evaluation Components:

The evaluation consisted of several components, which together provided a comprehensive, ongoing picture of the projects and provided the needed support and technical assistance to project participants. The evaluation components are: (a) program evaluation, (b) content evaluation, (c) language development evaluation, and (d) role of technology.

(a) Program Evaluation

The program evaluation component was designed to learn about the factors that support sustainability of programs over time. This component focused on the factors that work for or against program development and sustainability including funding beyond the grant, technical support, systems/institutional support and leadership support. In this area the evaluators were looking for ways in which schools were able to address challenges of time, introduction of new technologies, staffing, establish processes for communication and articulation of curriculum between the foreign language and regular classroom teachers as well as across the K-12 spectrum. The professional development needs of staff in both instructional best practices and the use of technology as a teaching tool were also considered important aspects of the program's success and sustainability.

(b) Content Evaluation

The focus of the content evaluation was to examine how grade level content is woven into the language instruction. Evaluators looked for the degree of content overlap and teacher collaboration at each stage of the teaching process (pre-teaching, co-teaching, and post-teaching), the role of collaboration in articulating content integration between the regular classroom curriculum and the foreign language instruction, and the effective uses of technology for content integration.

(c) Language Development

The essential question is, "Are children learning to communicate in the foreign language?"

The essential question of this component is, "Are children learning to communicate in the foreign language?" Very little quantitative data is available from these TEACH grant projects to gauge the amount of language learned compared to other models of elementary foreign language instruction. Two factors make it difficult to measure the amount of language students learned in these project sites and make comparisons: the short span of instruction (no program met for the minimum recommended three times per week throughout the school year) and the fact that all language learning begins with a receptive phase in which children are taking in the sounds and patterns of the new language in meaningful chunks, but are able to produce only a reduced and memorized amount of language. Any evaluation of what students were able to produce in the foreign language was limited to exactly what had been taught, eliminating the possibility of comparison across programs or of comparison with programs not using technology. When evidence of the language learning was available at a TEACH grant site, it is reported descriptively for that project.

To try to answer the essential question of how well children are learning to communicate in a new language, TEACH grant funds were used to train teachers in Wisconsin to use two instruments for evaluating the language learning of elementary students. These trained teachers carried out language assessment in four existing Wisconsin programs. The findings of these assessments are reported in Section V of this report (pages 39-46), linking the frequency and length of the instruction to the language levels achieved.

(d) Role of Technology

The role of technology was examined within the context of the three components mentioned above. The evaluation team felt strongly that this component must be addressed as a support mechanism for the teaching and learning of foreign language and was therefore most appropriately evaluated in light of its uses/misuses in the instructional process. However, the technologies themselves presented challenges that cannot be ignored or minimized in the evaluation process. Thus, an examination of the role of technology as an additional and separate item for evaluation is also included in this report.

Evaluation Process:

Several different strategies were employed for each of the components including site visits, surveys of teachers and administrators, language proficiency assessments, phone interviews, technical assistance in the form of learning networks and workshops, e-mail and phone consultations.

Site Visits - Three members of the Support and Evaluation Team (Connie Knop, Gordon Hanson, and Anne Conzemius) visited each of the project sites (with the exception of Oconto Falls, which was visited solely by Dr. Knop). The purpose of the site visits varied depending on which team member was making the visit, although for every project, at least one of the team members was able to interview the project coordinators, interview and observe the foreign language and regular classroom teacher(s) and observe instruction using the technologies of that particular project.

Technical Assistance - Dr. Knop provided feedback and recommendations to the teachers following each site visit. In addition to the site visits, two technical assistance workshops (October 19, 2001 and April 26, 2002) were held at which project participants shared program ideas, curricula, and lessons and discussed the challenges they faced in implementing their projects.

Surveys – Three separate survey tools were designed and administered as part of the evaluation process. The first survey tool was a needs assessment. It was administered early in Fall 2001. Its purpose was to determine each project's need for technical assistance in getting the project up and running and to learn what was already in place that might be shared with the larger network of teachers statewide. The second survey tool, administered in Winter 2001-02, was designed to gain the project coordinators' perspectives on the degree to which their school could support, sustain and achieve success as defined by their project's objectives. The third survey, administered in May 2002, was

designed to gain the perspectives of both the foreign language and the regular classroom teachers plus administrators and others less directly involved with the project with regard to the implementation and effectiveness of the instruction.

Phone Conferences/Interviews – Phone conferences and interviews were conducted on an as-needed basis for both technical assistance and clarification of project objectives.

E-mail – A list-serve was created so that project participants could easily communicate as a network. E-mail also served as a vehicle for providing quick responses and feedback for the purposes of technical assistance, communicating important information and updates on timelines, project requirements and changes, making announcements of upcoming events, and for managing logistical arrangements associated with all aspects of the project.

IV. PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS AND RESULTS

A. Cooperative Educational Services Agency (CESA) #12

Initial Plan – Because the school districts of Ashland, Bayfield, Drummond, Hayward, Superior, South Shore, Washburn and Winter had an established relationship as a result of their membership in the Northern Wisconsin Educational Communications System (NWECS), the plan was to continue with these same partners on the FLES project. With the technical assistance, coordination and technical capacity of CESA 12 to provide distance learning opportunities in each district, it was believed that the conditions were in place to sustain this project into the future.

The consortium planned to use the grant year to build the foundation for a multi-year commitment to establishing an elementary foreign language program. The money would be used to develop an elementary curriculum that could be adapted to the needs of each district. In most districts the curriculum would be implemented in the first grade and delivered by the middle or high school Spanish teacher from that district. During the first year the Spanish teacher would work with the first grade children and with the first grade teachers. After the grant period, the first grade teachers would then be prepared to implement the curriculum with only occasional support from the Spanish teacher. The Spanish teachers would then move on to the second grade classrooms, following the students through grade 6 and training teachers along the way. At the end of the year, the consortium would have developed an elementary foreign language curriculum and a sustainable method for introducing it to K-6 students. Elementary teachers would be trained to deliver foreign language instruction. Foreign language teachers would be trained to teach elementary students and a supportive peer network would be in place.

Actual Project – For three reasons, the project had to be dramatically changed, but through thoughtful redirecting of resources, created a useful model to learn how the technology of distance learning can deliver foreign language instruction in elementary grades.

1) In Summer 2001, the person in charge of supervision of the grant left CESA 12 and the director of all curriculum and instruction had to take on the additional duties of this grant. Consequently much of the preliminary coordination of district schedules, identifying the teacher, and writing the curriculum was not completed in time for starting instruction in Fall 2001.

2) The teacher and facilitator of the distance learning elementary language instruction were not identified in time to begin instruction in Fall 2001.

3) The coordination of schedules in the participating districts, including freeing the teacher to deliver instruction from South Shore High School, precluded the start of instruction in Fall 2001.

Ultimately the model delivered in CESA 12 did provide Spanish instruction to grades K-6, but for a much shorter period of time and to far fewer districts than originally planned. Elementary Spanish was delivered over the ITV network in CESA 12, from a classroom located at South Shore to classes in Winter and Drummond. With the supervision of Geri Wrege, recently retired K-12 Spanish teacher in Mellen (CESA 12), units of instruction were developed and customized for delivery over the network, with each grade level receiving 50 minutes of instruction daily for two weeks. Instruction began with kindergarteners in January 2002 and continued by consecutive grade levels through May 2002. Supporting roles for on-site classroom teachers were defined and materials were provided for local site use.

Program Evaluation – Based on data gathered from teacher surveys and from observations from site visits and video-taped lessons the CESA 12 model provided both teachers and students with an appreciation for elementary foreign language learning. Teachers reported that students were enthusiastic, excited, and definitely benefited from the experience. This was true at every grade level. Teachers also reported that they could see the benefits of starting at a very young age. "It widens the horizons of our kids and they get a taste of another language and culture." Another teacher stated, "At this age the interest is high and I think they would be fairly fluent Spanish speakers by the time they get to high school as opposed to just beginning." Yet another said, "It emphasized the fact that a foreign language should be taught early, when children are naturally learning their language and the brain is most accepting of this type of information."

"At this age the interest is high; they would be fairly fluent Spanish speakers by the time they get to high school as opposed to just beginning."

The regular classroom teachers were willing to make scheduling, space, and technology accommodations for the program. They provided support in a variety of ways including being present with their students, teaching them how to use the technology, managing classroom behaviors and helping them to prepare for the experience by working with the students to select a Spanish name prior to the first lesson. What varied from teacher to teacher was the extent to which they were comfortable reinforcing and using what the students had learned in Spanish as a regular part of their own classroom activities. The teachers who had taken Spanish in college were able to do some reinforcement whereas those with little or no exposure did not.

The amount and length of time spent in actual instruction was of concern to everyone. For the youngest children (kindergarten – 2nd grade), the sessions were too long and had too much content. Teachers

indicated that 20 minutes would have been better. At third and fourth grade 30 minutes was seen as appropriate. Regardless of grade level teachers agreed that every day for two weeks only was not sufficient. They would have preferred shorter sessions over an entire semester or a two week immersion with weekly follow-up sessions thereafter.

Content Evaluation - The instruction provided at CESA 12 correlated with what was being taught in the regular kindergarten and first grade curriculum (alphabet and numbers) and correlated with social studies and English/Language Arts curricula at the higher grade levels. Specifically, the study of Mexican and Spanish cultures, maps and geography, and sentence construction and masculine and feminine articles aligned with the regular curriculum at the higher grades. The emphasis on culture was of particular interest and importance to the regular classroom teachers. One teacher stated, "This class helped me realize the importance of teaching about diversity and doing many multicultural experiences."

Language Development - The teachers felt that students' short term retention of learning was aided by the use of songs and the high level of interest that students had in learning words that were applicable to their everyday lives. They observed children speaking to each other in Spanish outside of the class, recalled words from one day to the next, asked questions and gave commands in Spanish, and could sing the songs long after their instruction had ended. On the other hand, the teachers felt that longer term retention of learning was compromised by the instructional schedule, their own lack of ability to follow-up and help the children apply what they had learned, and because their district did not offer ongoing instruction until high school or middle school. When asked to estimate the extent to which the students would retain what they had learned long term, the responses varied from 0-50%, with the majority of respondents estimating 10-20%.

Students' short term retention of learning was aided by the use of songs and the high level of interest that students had in learning words that were applicable to their everyday lives.

Role of Technology – The CESA 12 Spanish teacher, Brigid Ripley, was experienced and skilled in the use of distance technology for teaching foreign language. The equipment at South Shore was in good working order and presented minimal technological problems. Students and the teacher could be heard and seen. However, for the very youngest children, the technology was sometimes distracting and the presence of children from other schools increased extraneous noise and curiosity. Behavior management became an issue for slightly older children who wanted to play with the microphones and adjust themselves to be seen on TV at all times. Teachers observed that children were less likely to get their questions answered quickly because there was too much to attend to with three classrooms online at once. The fact that each school was operating off a different daily, weekly and yearly schedule made for logistic difficulties and instructional gaps and downtimes (e.g., two groups waiting for one school to arrive only

to discover that another school would have to leave early). The bottom line for most teachers was, despite the benefits of opportunity to learn a foreign language via distance technology, these teachers still would prefer to have the Spanish teacher in their classrooms, live and in person.

The excitement and enthusiasm of the children and the regular classroom teachers is one element of sustainability that bodes well for continuation.

Plan for Sustainability – Leadership and support for this project has come largely from CESA 12 Director of Curriculum, Sue Masterson, Elementary Spanish teacher, Brigid Ripley and High School Spanish teacher, Gerri Wrege. CESA 12 planned to bring teams of elementary and Spanish teachers from the NWECS network together to review curriculum units and to plan for how to implement them in 2002-03. Certainly, the excitement and enthusiasm of the children and the regular classroom teachers is one element of sustainability that bodes well for continuation. One kindergarten teacher summed up her thoughts in this way, "I would like to see a continuing foreign language program for children in the elementary school. There is enormous interest and excitement. My little ones especially enjoyed the songs and movement activities." Unfortunately, funding for continuation of the program was not in place at the time of the final site visit in May.

B. Dodgeville

Initial Plan – The initial plan for the Dodgeville program was to implement classroom-based instruction of Spanish in kindergarten and first grade in Dodgeville's two elementary schools. In each subsequent year, a grade level would be added until Dodgeville had a fully functioning K-6 Foreign Language Program. Currently the district offers Spanish in grades 7-12.

The plan included the use of two innovative technologies as instructional aides. One, the Classroom Performance System (CPS), is an instructional and assessment tool that involves the use of small handheld devices used by the students to obtain immediate feedback on their learning. The other is the use of DVD technology which would allow the teacher to relate students' prior knowledge and current learning in the content areas with the target language through the use of labels, subtitles, and freeze framing.

Monies provided by the grant were to be used for the first year of implementation, allowing the Dodgeville School District to hire an experienced elementary foreign language teacher and to purchase the technology and materials needed to implement the program.

Actual Project – The project was implemented according to the original plan. During this first year, the FLES teacher taught 11 total classes of kindergarten and first grade: 6 kindergarten classes at 20 minutes/day, 3 days per 6 day cycle and 5 first grade classes at 30 minutes/day, 3 days per 6 day cycle. The CPS was purchased and used by the first graders beginning in November of 2001; the kindergartners were introduced to the technology in the spring semester. The delayed introduction of the CPS at the kindergarten level was due to the students' developmental readiness to manipulate the devices appropriately.

Program Evaluation – Spanish is alive and well in Dodgeville's elementary schools! Señora Hanke (aka Natalie), Dodgeville's FLES teacher is described as a clear leader; an enthusiastic and hard-working advocate for foreign language instruction. In addition to the implementation of the kindergarten and first grade classroom programs, Spanish is seen and heard throughout the buildings. Children are greeted in Spanish and instructions used in the hallways, on the playground, and in the cafeteria are also given in Spanish, not only by the FLES teacher but by others as well. Music and art teachers work with Natalie on projects that enhance the learning of Spanish in their programs. And, cultural activities are school-wide, allowing students in grades 2-5 who were not receiving direct instruction in Spanish to enjoy and learn about the Spanish culture.

In the FLES program, Señora Hanke provided instruction almost entirely in Spanish, inserting English translations on an occasional basis only when absolutely necessary. The regular classroom teachers were involved in both the planning of the curriculum and the extension and reinforcement of the new learning throughout the day. The teachers participated along with their classes, providing behavior management support and modeling language learning along side their students. Classroom teachers created word cards to label commonly used words in their rooms.

The regular classroom teachers were involved in both the planning of the curriculum and the extension and reinforcement of the new learning throughout the day. The teachers participated along with their classes.

When asked about the children's reactions to the program, the regular classroom teachers' response was, "They love it!" It was equally evident that the classroom teachers were enjoying the experience as well. Several were able to articulate how being a part of the program gave them new ideas and strategies for working with students in other curricular areas. The use of songs, visual stimuli, active movement, and immediate feedback and reinforcement via the CPS were all seen as effective teaching aides that are transferable. One teacher reported that students focused better when she used Spanish expressions to get the students' attention.

The amount of time the FLES teacher spent with each class and the consistency of instruction from one cycle to the next was viewed as a

real plus for the program. Children were able to recall much of what they learned from one day to the next and build on their learning with remarkable ease.

Content Evaluation – The FLES teacher met with the classroom teachers once a week during a common planning time. Collaboration and coordination of content were discussed and infused in the language learning. Stories and songs that go along with the language arts series in both kindergarten and first grade were shared with the language teacher. Some of the stories were in the target language and some were translated. The classroom teacher coordinated with the FLES teacher so that the stories could be read during Spanish class. The classroom teachers showed their commitment and interest by attending a summer workshop to learn about the program and to create materials for their classrooms. Additionally, they continue to come to the FLES teacher with ideas to share as they come across them.

Examples of common instructional themes included colors, farm animals, calendar, counting/numbers, holidays, and families. The children also learned common rules, manners, and listening skills as a result of the efforts to connect their regular and foreign language classrooms. One unpredictable challenge did arise however: classroom teachers expressed concern that early on in the kindergarten curriculum the children would become confused while learning their alphabet simultaneously in English and Spanish since the pronunciations are different. Though there was no evidence of this occurring, it was decided that students should learn their alphabet and sounds in English first.

One kindergarten teacher wrote, "You hear them speaking to each other in Spanish during free time."

Language Development – There is plenty of anecdotal evidence to support that the children in the Dodgeville program not only comprehend but are applying their new language skills. Teacher observations, CPS assessments, and feedback from parents all indicate that language learning is taking place and that children are retaining what they are learning. One kindergarten teacher wrote, "You hear them speaking to each other in Spanish during free time." They use their Spanish both in and outside of the Spanish class. The children are proud to share what they are learning and enjoy "teaching" their teachers and parents new words. In fact, one teacher noted, "I've had my pronunciation of words corrected by my students."

When asked the extent to which they believed the students would retain what they are learning long term, the responses from the classroom teachers ranged from 75–90%. They stated that the factors that would most influence long-term retention would be continuation of the program throughout their elementary curriculum and continued peer interactions in Spanish.

Role of Technology – The CPS played a key role in the Dodgeville program. Students were able to receive immediate feedback on their learning and the teacher could receive an instantaneous report of how the class was doing as a whole as well as how each individual student was progressing. This allowed the teacher to adjust, reteach, and know what needed reinforcing most in the regular classroom setting. The children quickly learned how to use the hand-held devices and were not distracted by them. They enjoyed using them and were visibly excited to see their results after each assessment. Teachers also saw applications of this technology for use in their own classrooms.

One teacher noted, "I've had my pronunciation of words corrected by my students."

There were a few glitches with the technology itself. Occasionally, the system would freeze up when all the children were responding at once. Señora Hanke soon established a rotational process, which the children learned and applied with very little difficulty. The only problem with the alternative process was that it took more time and demanded more patience on the part of the students and teacher. Transporting the equipment from room to room became cumbersome so at about mid-year, the system was set up in a lab and the students and regular classroom teacher would move to it. The district was able to purchase two CPS systems so that the equipment did not need to be hauled between the two school sites.

Plan for Sustainability – As mentioned previously, the FLES teacher established herself as a clear leader and champion of the program. The respect she has earned from her colleagues and the success that she has demonstrated through student enthusiasm and learning will go a long way to sustain support for the program. Both school principals were very supportive of the program and worked to provide time for collaborative planning and coordination with the regular classroom teachers. Two days during the school year were set aside for curriculum planning and material development. The FLES teacher also received support from the foreign language teacher at the high school as well as from the technology teacher and the classroom teachers. The classroom teachers reported that they definitely see the benefits for the students in both the long and short term and believe strongly that this is the right age to introduce foreign language learning opportunities. The plan is to add second grade to the Spanish curriculum for the school year 2002-2003. The fact that Dodgeville does have Spanish offerings at the middle and high school level will give students an opportunity to continue their learning. The vision for Dodgeville School District is to provide a well-articulated sequence of foreign language instruction K-12, allowing all students the opportunity to achieve a higher level of proficiency in a second language.

The challenges are predictable. The workload for one teacher, especially in a start up phase, is overwhelming. Time for collaborative planning and curriculum development, financial support for additional

staff to expand the program, space needs, and schedules all make sustainability a difficult challenge.

C. Kettle Moraine

Initial Plan – The School District of Kettle Moraine has made a long-term commitment to its K-12 foreign language program. Beginning in 1987 and growing steadily throughout the years, the program has been host to numerous visitors from across the state seeking to learn more about how to start an elementary foreign language program.

Its unique approach is designed to expand upon and strengthen the existing classroom-based instructional program through the integration and use of emerging Internet and distance technologies.

World Language Connections for Results, the project funded as a part of this FLES grant, is a K-5 Spanish program serving four elementary schools in the Kettle Moraine district. Its unique approach is designed to expand upon and strengthen the existing classroom-based instructional program through the integration and use of emerging Internet and distance technologies. The plan calls for the following activities:

- Creation of an interactive web page containing language-learning resources, educational activities, a publishing area for students' projects/writing and sister school links that expand learning opportunities into the homes of students, parents, and the community.
- Connection of students to native speakers and other learners of Spanish using two-way interactive video conferencing technology.
- Update of the existing elementary Spanish curriculum to incorporate the state foreign language model academic standards and the use of technology.
- Creation of curriculum development/intervention teams consisting of foreign language and classroom teachers to investigate, create, and strengthen cross-curricular connections and learning opportunities for students in both the foreign language and regular classrooms.
- Provision of professional development utilizing technology to train classroom teachers in ways to support the language program and provide support for teachers, students, and the community to use the resources compiled throughout the year.

The initial plan was to use grant funds for the implementation of the project including pay for substitute teachers during professional development activities and any additional hardware that might be needed to perform the above activities.

Actual Project – Throughout the year, the Kettle Moraine project was pretty much on target with their initial plan, with only a slight modification to the distance learning component. Audray Weber, the FLES teacher and project coordinator reported on the following results.

Grant funds were used to purchase a laptop, smart board, projector, digital camera, video digital camera, and software for each elementary building.

Information gathering and input of curricular resources onto the web page was a key teacher activity through two-thirds of the school year. Additional information related to technology, state standards, and assessment references was being sought. The web site now contains four components: an overview to the program, teacher introductions, language resources, and an explanation of the role of technology. The website is found at: http://district.kmsd.edu/~spanish/3-21home.html

The web site's program overview provides the mission statement, program description, specific learning objectives for each grade level, detailed curriculum guides for each grade level (including a month-by-month overview plus detailed unit descriptions with activities and resources), description of the development and articulation of the elementary program with middle school and senior high offerings, narrative of the assessment evidence collected, and teacher-created dictionaries for each unit of instruction.

In the language resource section called "Vamos a aprender español" (Let's learn Spanish), students encounter online materials to reinforce what they are learning in the classroom. Students can access links to other Spanish language learning web sites, dictionaries, and radio broadcasts, plus curriculum-connected webquests, activities, and resources.

In an effort to enhance community support of the program, a world cultures day was organized and carried out. It included 30 presenters from throughout the community, many of whom were natives of the countries they represented. According to Ms. Weber, the most important discovery that was made as a result of this day was the change in perception that this seemingly homogeneous community is actually very diverse, with a much higher percentage of first generation immigrant families in the school district.

Kettle Moraine discovered its roots; this district is not as homogeneous as we suspected. Only through the study of another language did we find out the depth of our diversity!

Students participated in a web-based project that followed the migration of the monarch butterfly from the Midwest to Mexico and back again. Kettle Moraine students sent out symbolic butterflies with notes attached to Minneapolis, which were then forwarded as paper butterflies to the Children's Museum in Mexico City. From there the butterflies were forwarded to children in Mexico. The butterflies were then

sent back to the Midwest accompanied by letters from children in Mexico. The progress of this migration was followed on the web.

Fourth and fifth grade students sent letters in Spanish about themselves to students in a school in the Dominican Republic. Community members from GE Medical Systems helped the students edit their letters. Many of the letters were written on the computer. This was done in cooperation with a project that GE Medical Systems coordinated in which backpacks filled with school supplies were donated and then stuffed with letters from Kettle Moraine students to Spanish speaking children all over the world.

Another component of the project included a lunch recess Spanish Computer Club for students to use the software and expand the time that they are learning a language. This evaluator had the opportunity to visit the Spanish Club during one of its lunch recess sessions. Approximately a dozen students participated on that day. They came into the computer lab and knew immediately what to do to get started, although there were some difficulties with the start-up on several of the computers. It was determined that the software was the problem and once a new CD was in place, the students were able to navigate independently through the lessons with ease.

The professional development component of the project was provided via half-day in-service sessions for all of the elementary school staff in all four of the elementary buildings involved in the project. The content of these sessions focused on helping school staff learn ways to incorporate second language learning in the classroom when the Spanish teacher is not there and how to use the technologies to make that task easier.

The Kettle Moraine program utilizes the general curriculum found in the elementary school, reinforcing in Spanish, the knowledge, skills, and concepts of the general curriculum.

The distance learning component of the project presented the biggest challenges. Due to network difficulties associated with the digital video cameras and laptop configurations, this part of the project had some false starts. It was decided that the scope of this component should be downsized in an attempt to make it work between just two of the elementary buildings. Then, once working on a small scale, the plan was to expand it to the other two buildings and then finally to the native speaker contacts. While the connection between two of Kettle Moraine's elementary schools was possible, it was also cumbersome requiring a technician in the district office to change network connections at the beginning and end of each session. This precluded expanding the connection to include the other elementary schools. Kettle Moraine elementary students have connected to native speakers, however, through an International Culture Day, visits from exchange students, and other guest speakers. Recorded voices of other native speakers have been brought in via the Internet.

Program Evaluation – Since Kettle Moraine already had a K-12 program in place, the typical challenges associated with starting a program were not of concern. Both the systems and the people were already in place. There is one teacher at each of the elementary schools. This language specialist goes into each of the classrooms two times per week. The language teachers are an integral part of the school. They attend staff meetings and in-service training. The Spanish and regular classroom teachers and the students know the routine and are enthusiastic about the program.

Site visits revealed a fast-paced, highly interactive and varied delivery of Spanish instruction within the regular classroom. The students were on task and engaged in their learning. Ms. Weber taught her lessons in Spanish and used pictures, gestures, dance, songs, repetition, and food as stimuli in her lessons. The students were expected to utilize both their expressive and receptive language in a variety of oral and written tasks.

Content Evaluation – The Kettle Moraine program utilizes the general curriculum found in the elementary school, reinforcing in Spanish, the knowledge, skills, and concepts of the general curriculum. Language learning is not done in isolation but rather in conjunction with the regular curriculum and is delivered in the regular classroom with the classroom teacher present. The language teacher regularly meets with the classroom teachers to coordinate lessons. Depending on the grade level, Spanish lessons reinforce teaching in English/ Language Arts, Social Studies, Science and Math and also include special events such as holidays and cultural activities.

Language learning is not done in isolation but rather in conjunction with the regular curriculum and is delivered in the regular classroom with the classroom teacher present.

A key component of this grant is the revision/updating of curriculum. This was to be done throughout the spring and summer by teams of teachers working on the various levels in grades K-5. The revisions are to include the state standards and use of technology for instruction.

Role of Technology – This project utilized a variety of technologies to enhance and deliver instruction. Digital video cameras were used to document a trip with students to Mexico. They were also used to record students' skits and presentations for playback and feedback to students and their parents. Laptop computers, video projectors, and smart boards were used to teach new lessons and in some cases, to demonstrate the use of software that students would learn to use independently in the computer lab. The Web was used to connect children to Spanish-speaking peers throughout the world.

The biggest challenges for this project were the logistics and technical challenges associated with supporting the integration of new technologies into the existing curriculum and instructional model. First, the challenge of transporting and setting up/breaking down the equipment

when classes are being taught in various locations back-to-back is not insignificant. One initial solution, (i.e., teaching in a sheltered area of the IMC where the equipment could be set up ahead of time) saved valuable instructional time but was not as conducive to student learning as a classroom setting. Students became distracted and unsettled when their routine was disrupted.

Since space is an issue for many elementary schools, finding an "extra" classroom where equipment can be set up and left throughout the day is often not an option. Additionally, Ms. Weber reported that some time had to be spent with each school to find places to store equipment when it was not being used.

To address the technical challenges associated with new technologies, Ms. Weber was able to find resource people in the school and district who helped with both learning how to use the new equipment and with the logistics of setting it up for instructional purposes. An unintended benefit of this was the new collegial relationships that were formed.

The numbers of students enrolling in and completing foreign language classes at the high school level has increased over the years as the elementary program has grown. This is true in all of the languages offered, not just Spanish.

Plan for Sustainability – The likelihood for sustainability of this program is high, given the historic commitment of the district to its K-12 foreign language program. The numbers of students enrolling in and completing foreign language classes at the high school level has increased over the years as the elementary program has grown. This is true in all of the languages offered, not just Spanish.

The greatest barrier to continuation is likely to be burnout on the part of the elementary language specialists/teachers. The pace is frenetic, the logistics are challenging, and the scope of responsibility that they assume is very broad. It takes an unusually energetic, well-organized, and committed teacher to manage the multiplicity of tasks that were observed on site visits to Kettle Moraine.

D. Madison

Initial Plan – Madison Metropolitan School District, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin – Madison and the School District of Verona submitted an initial grant proposal entitled, "Team Teaching Early Foreign Language (TTEFL)." The plan focused on exploring the systematic and innovative use of digital video in a start-up environment, using video-based distance instruction of foreign language in grades K-6. Midvale Elementary School in Madison was to be the main site for instruction and teacher education. Because Midvale is a Professional Development School (PDS) and as such is already very connected to the university, the collaborative nature of this project was a logical and manageable approach. Verona was selected as the distance learning site since the main hardware requirements for

distance learning were already in place. Ultimately, this component of the grant application was not included in the final project design.

Actual Project – In Spring, 2001, a FLES pilot program was started at Midvale Elementary School in Madison. The program began and continues to be optional on the part of the classroom teachers. During the spring semester half (14/28) of the regular classroom teachers opted to participate in the pilot. In its first semester of this project, 19 of now 24 classroom teachers have volunteered.

The characteristics of the project are unique in several ways. Spanish classes are taught by student teachers from the University of Wisconsin. These individuals are either on a training sequence as regular elementary teachers or they are 6-12 trained Spanish teachers who are working towards an additional certification at the K-5 level. There are no "cooperating teachers" per se, as the student teachers move from classroom to classroom with their mobile classroom (cart on wheels). Classes are 30 minutes in length and range from two times per week to four times per week. The regular education teachers that choose to include Spanish in their weekly curricula are considered mentor teachers. Their role is to assist the student teacher in developing age appropriate activities, give reflections and feedback on teaching and give guidance in classroom management techniques. Some of the mentor teachers participate alongside of their students; all are present in the classroom during the Spanish instruction. Student teachers meet with each mentor teacher once per week to ensure ongoing communication and student success. Student teachers also teach Spanish language classes to the mentor teachers.

The regular education teachers assist the student teacher in developing age appropriate activities, give reflections and feedback on teaching and give guidance in classroom management techniques.

The technology component of this project includes the production and use of videotapes that can be used as a part of the instructional process. The tapes are developed and used by the FLES teachers with technical support from the university and Madison School District personnel from central office and West High School. They support the curricular offerings of the regular program and feature native Spanish-speaking people from Cuba, Mexico, and Nicaragua in real life situations as well as actors in dramatized situations. The tapes are instructional in nature and are related to the themes being taught at Midvale (e.g., growing a plant, the water cycle). There are also several tapes of the student teachers using the tapes in the classroom. The original plan called for the development of instructional scripts for each of the tapes, which would include lesson objectives, standards, and benchmarks for the curricular areas being taught. At the time of the final site visit, the scripts had not yet been developed.

Program Evaluation – Judging from the level of voluntary participation and the obvious enthusiasm of the regular classroom teachers, this program is well on its way to becoming an integral part of the Midvale

curriculum. Despite the challenges of scheduling associated with the placement of new student teachers each semester, their presence in the school seems welcomed and natural. Because there are no "cooperating teachers" in the traditional sense and because most of the Mentor Teachers do not speak the language nor have backgrounds in foreign language pedagogy, there is a great deal of supervision that is required on the part of the two project coordinators. Student teachers are observed in at least two classes per week. The project coordinators are on site two days per week each and are available for Mentor Teacher communication as well as for student teacher guidance.

The student teacher involved every student in both expressive and receptive tasks and gave lots of feedback to the students on their performance.

The lessons observed by this evaluator were active, fast-paced, fun, and engaging. The student teacher had complete command of the lesson and the students, using Spanish more than 90% of the time. She involved every student in both expressive and receptive tasks and gave lots of feedback to the students on their performance. The games, songs, and activities were age appropriate. It was a non-threatening learning environment. The students knew what was expected of them so there were no behavioral issues to deal with during the lesson period observed.

The second site visit revealed student teacher strengths in the following areas:

- Thorough preparation of lessons
- Use of routines to start the class and "tune" students into Spanish
- Hands-on activities
- Several short activities for each class period
- Enthusiasm and sincere interest nurtured in the children

The student teachers develop their own instructional materials and cart them around from room to room, literally carrying them up stairwells and through the hallways. There is a central spot for storage of resource materials and collaborative lesson kits are being developed along the way. But in the meantime, it is very cumbersome for these young teachers. Project coordinators Denise Hanson and Donna Vukelich state, "In an ideal situation, there would be a separate FLES classroom so student teachers could really settle into a physical space."

"Our language learning program complements and strengthens the literacy program already in place."

Content Evaluation – Spanish lessons are content-based. Kindergarten, first and second grades' state standards for social studies and science have been developed into thematic units. This is done collaboratively with the regular classroom teachers and shared with others. According to one project coordinator, "Our language learning program complements and strengthens the literacy program already in place." The Wisconsin Model Academic Standards are integrated into each

series of lesson plans drawn up by the student teachers. The science and social studies curriculum by grade has also been integrated into the foreign language classes so students are receiving instruction in Spanish around standard content areas.

Language Development – At this TEACH grant site, the outside assessment of students' language development occurred through the use of the Early Language Listening and Oral Proficiency Assessment (ELLOPA). Six pairs of second-grade students were randomly selected to be assessed in the interview format of the ELLOPA. The students at Midvale Elementary School are almost equally one-third African-American, Southeast Asian-American, and European-American in background. Not all had received Spanish instruction in first grade as well as second grade. Comparing the Midvale second grade students to the second grade students in established programs in three Wisconsin districts and to a non-Wisconsin program offering thirty minutes of instruction five days per week, showed that the Midvale students were doing relatively well, given less instruction per week and fewer weeks of instruction. For further comparison, see section V (pages 39-46).

Role of Technology – The project planners considerably underestimated the amount of time and technical expertise it would take to produce the videotapes, especially in the editing phase. Despite a slow start, by February the tape library included 6 tapes ready to be shown in the classroom of five or more minutes in length; 7 tapes in production and ready for classroom use under five minutes in length; and 4 with enough material to start production but not yet assigned to a production team. Video work sessions were held for team members and Spanish student teachers to review and revise existing tapes and tapes in production. Teacher's guides are being developed for each tape and the coordination and tracking of their use in the classroom is now underway. Technical assistance was provided by Dr. Knop on how best to use the videotapes as an instructional tool.

Plan for Sustainability – From the beginning, the curriculum planning for this project was done collaboratively with the Midvale teachers. The "trial" semester was a crucial first step toward building ownership and understanding of the program. Teachers have given input and suggestions for improvement throughout the process and therefore, feel a part of the program and are much more willing to support it. The Madison program has had excellent support from the building administration as well as from the university. One teacher told an evaluation team member, "Someone from the university always seems to be around in case the student teachers need them or if we have a question." Teachers have not felt overwhelmed because they were only expected to meet with the student teacher 5 minutes per week and because they had notebooks in which to write down comments and questions when needed. Part of the sustainability

From the beginning, the curriculum planning for this project was done collaboratively with the Midvale teachers.

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formula will depend on the extent to which the project coordinators can themselves sustain the level and scope of work that comes with the job (e.g., organizing the program, supervising student teachers, stepping in to teach when someone is sick or otherwise unavailable, teaching classes to Mentor Teachers, etc.).

When asked about the benefits of continuing the program, the Mentor Teachers were quick to point out that "the kids LOVE it." But even more importantly, "Some of the kids are starting to understand how hard it must be for the non-English speaking students in class to learn English." "It levels the playing fields – everyone starts out on an equal footing despite prior educational advantages or home advantages." These unintended benefits are the kinds of things that motivate teachers. It's one thing to believe that it's a good thing for children to learn a foreign language but it is much more powerful to see children who may not otherwise excel being successful. Teachers and parents alike have expressed an interest in seeing the program expand to include Midvale's partner school, Lincoln School, so that the children who began this year will be able to continue in coming years. The challenge is that the program is dependent on the supervision and coordination of student teachers, and both the supervisors and the student teachers were provided by the University of Wisconsin. This is not a permanent arrangement and the district is not able to budget for maintenance of this program. To sustain the program, collaboration is essential between the university which needs to find a student teaching site for candidates for certification to teach languages in elementary grades and the school district which has now showcased this proven model of success for helping develop literacy in disadvantaged students.

"Some of the kids are starting to understand how hard it must be for the non-English speaking students in class to learn English."

"It levels the playing fields – everyone starts out on an equal footing despite prior educational advantages or home advantages."

E. Milwaukee

Initial Plan – Milwaukee Public Schools proposed expanding its foreign language elementary school instruction using distance learning in three schools (Congress Year Round School, Starms Elementary School, and Hartford University Elementary School). The plan provided for foreign language instruction daily for thirty minutes using interactive video conferencing. The Milwaukee French Immersion School was to serve as the base site for the instruction as well as be the support structure for the project. The strategies of this initiative include:

- Enhancing current foreign language instruction at the three target schools mentioned above using interactive distance-learning technology to provide more frequent instruction.
- Creating a strong staff development component to instruct classroom teachers on the use of technology for instruction and best practices in foreign language instruction.

- Establishing a web site as a student, teacher, and community resource for foreign language acquisition.
- Collaborating with local universities, businesses, and the Milwaukee Public Library for support (sharing of resources and expertise).

Funds were to be used for a Project Instructor/Coordinator, professional development and training, computers, student field trips, supplies and materials, and program evaluation.

Actual Project – The actual project was implemented as a pilot in the three target schools as planned with the exception of the language being taught and consequently, the base site from which instruction was delivered. Spanish instruction was brought into the three elementary schools via video conferencing from Milwaukee's Spanish Immersion School. Lessons were offered each day for 30 minutes. Mid year, Hartford University Elementary School was dropped from the program due to a variety of system issues and health issues on the part of the participating classroom teacher.

Program Evaluation – Two site visits and several exchanges with key personnel in the Milwaukee project confirm that, as with each of the other FLES project sites, the enthusiasm for foreign language learning at the elementary level cannot be squelched by inherent challenges. Despite difficulties with technology, schedules, and start-up logistics, the teachers, students, and parents remain enthusiastic and supportive of the program. For example, according to Linda Lopez, Project Coordinator and Toni Fink, Spanish immersion teacher, "For the host classroom from which the lessons are taught, there has been an increased enthusiasm for perfecting their own Spanish skills. There has been a feeling of pride for learning Spanish and in teaching and sharing with peers who do not have the benefits of being in an immersion program. The receiving schools have also felt a sense of pride that they have been able to learn how to read, write, and speak Spanish. The progress has been consistent and rapid considering the length of the lessons. Enthusiasm from all schools has helped keep everyone involved, motivated and dedicated."

The enthusiasm for foreign language learning at the elementary level cannot be squelched by inherent challenges.

In addition to the obvious enthusiasm for the program, strengths of this project included the caring relationships and expert teaching of Señora Fink, the uniqueness of the opportunity provided to the sending school and the receiving schools, and the fact that children were learning material that was developmentally appropriate and at a high interest level for their age and grade.

As with any pilot project, there have been obstacles although they have not been insurmountable. Essentially, they fall into three categories:

technology, scheduling, and systemic support (communication, professional development, and leadership). The technology challenges will be addressed below under **Role of Technology.**

The initial plan called for the involvement of four schools, one as a base site and three others as receiving schools. As learned from other projects, scheduling can be problematic when more than one school is involved. In this case, with four schools, it became disproportionately problematic and was one of the reasons that Hartford University School was no longer able to continue. In Hartford's case, the students had to come in during their lunch hour and had to leave early when the room was needed for other activities. Occasionally, the receiving room at Hartford would be double-booked for all or a portion of the lesson. Students at Starms had to miss recess in order to participate and at Congress students sometimes waited up to 15 minutes at the beginning of the class period for the others to be settled and ready for instruction. Gratefully, teacher Nancy Skarich, was able to engage the children in activities using their Spanish as they waited. Scheduling was also a challenge when trying to find time for the teachers to meet with one another. Not all of the pilot teachers were able to attend the orientation session at the beginning of the project. They also had trouble meeting regularly due to varied schedules.

"Many things can look so simple by technology that reality of the time and effort necessary are not taken into consideration as well as the new roles of collaboration, communication, scheduling and working with multiple sites and individuals." Kathy Onarheim, Director, School Technology Support, Milwaukee Public Schools

Systemic issues such as leadership support, professional development, communication, and funding are often of concern in pilot and start-up programs. In part, that is because early on in a program's development there are too many unknowns to be able to adequately predict and plan in these important areas. In Milwaukee, the sheer size of the district may also make a difference.

Communication and leadership go hand in hand. In this case, the leadership and communication closest to the project (i.e., those assigned directly to this project such as project coordinators, Spanish teacher, and regular classroom teachers) were active and supportive at three of the four sites. However, expectations about attendance at planning meetings and training sessions, returning and responding to e-mail, and having materials prepared ahead of time were not uniformly communicated nor consistently supported at all sites at the level of building administration. There was a provision in the grant to provide funds for substitute teachers so that the project teachers could attend regular meetings, but this did not occur on a regular basis.

In the area of professional development, there was a strong need for teachers to come together to share their experiences and to learn strategies for extending Spanish speaking into their classrooms. Teachers also needed training on the basics of the technologies being used. Even when there was a self-identified strength in the general area called "technology," it wasn't until the teachers found themselves

face-to-face with using the equipment that they were able to realize the kind and extent of training needed.

Content Evaluation – One of the challenges (as well as the strengths) of this particular model was the fact that the base site students had already acquired a certain command of vocabulary and speaking in the foreign language. The challenge for the teacher was to find content that would be stimulating to those children as well as understandable to their peers who were just beginning to learn the language. Señora Fink selected a rain forest theme that involved new vocabulary for all the children, appealed to their interests, and had connections to other curricular offerings in the regular classrooms. At Congress, Ms. Skarich's class was immersed in the study of a related Social Studies unit. The students studied the language, geography, climate, cities, clothing, food, and indigenous animals of a region. They created research story boards to depict all they had learned, which then became part of a school wide cultural festival.

Language Development – Observations of the students at the receiving schools revealed that they had learned some useful phrases and vocabulary in Spanish. They also learned to read and write some vocabulary items and comprehended the basic greetings, numbers, and days of the week. They were able to respond appropriately using good pronunciation in simple conversational exchanges and social courtesies, and put together presentations in Spanish related to the unit's content.

Students were able to respond appropriately using good pronunciation in simple conversational exchanges and social courtesies, and put together presentations in Spanish related to the unit's content.

Role of Technology – This project depended on the technology; it was a vital component of the delivery of instruction. Unfortunately, the equipment in the three schools was not compatible with the equipment in the Immersion School. This necessitated the introduction of a "bridge" for connecting the classrooms. Once the bridge was in place, there still were some glitches and occasionally the connection did not work at all. From the receiving end, the audio component of the broadcast was working but not clear. This can be particularly problematic in the learning of a foreign language where it is crucial for students to have a clear aural model. In fact, on one site visit the children being observed on the receiving end were actually learning an inaccurate pronunciation of a new vocabulary word and since the classroom teacher was unfamiliar with the vocabulary being taught, she was not able to correct what they were learning. A second problem with the transmission of audio was more technical in nature. The technology aide who was assisting with the equipment explained that the large number of frequencies being used throughout the city was interfering with a clear transmission to the school. Finally, the arrangement of the equipment in the classroom, in combination with the seating arrangement for the students (in rows at long tables) was less than optimal. Though the arrangement made it possible for the sending school to see

all the children, the pedagogical and behavioral needs of the children on the receiving end were compromised.

Plan for Sustainability – Plans for continuation of the program are unknown.

Lesson learned: the interest of the school beyond simply the implementer and the commitment of the broader staff is key.

F. Oconto Falls

Initial Plan – Oconto Falls initially proposed a project focused on four themes:

- Expansion of foreign language instruction to all elementary students over the course of three years, utilizing face-to-face instruction supplemented by distance learning.
- Connecting Oconto Falls K-12 students to native speakers of the target language utilizing distance learning.
- Offering foreign language instruction over a distance to other elementary schools in the region.
- Providing professional development for foreign language teachers within and outside the district and for elementary teachers who will be using foreign language in their daily routines.

TEACH grant funds were to be used to provide instruction coordinated by two interns for French instruction and a .5 FTE Spanish teacher. A distance learning classroom was to be established to provide instruction for both the high school and Abrams Elementary School (20 miles away). In addition, other technology-based equipment would be purchased to support a variety of activities, electronic assessment, and community participation. As one example, the initial plan was to move a laptop from classroom to classroom for students to use for language acquisition and reinforcement. Professional development would be offered in the form of an intensive, five-day summer academy, preparing both foreign language and classroom teachers to integrate the target language into curriculum routines. Ongoing professional development was also planned for area foreign language teachers.

Actual Project – Due to dramatic shifts in expected funding levels from this and other grant sources and to the lack of availability of a part time teacher or intern, the activities that were initially proposed for this project underwent major revision.

A .5 FTE teacher was hired who was fluent in both French and Spanish and traveled between both schools. Time was built into the schedule for teacher consultation so she (the teacher) could plan lessons in the target language that correlated to the classroom instruction for the week. This teacher wrote curriculum goals and activities during the first three weeks in September and began instruction during the fourth week of school. The instructor attended a variety of conferences, visited the Menasha foreign language program, and observed the high school foreign language instructors to learn the best teaching practices for elementary foreign language instruction.

The technology integration component of this project incorporated the use of video pen pals and cooperative PowerPoint projects. High school and elementary school students were paired as video pen pals. The elementary students gave a small presentation about him/herself and the high school students answered the "letter" with a presentation in the target language. Students discussed their families, their pets, the weather, their hobbies, and activities. "Letters" were exchanged three times during the second semester when it was felt the students had sufficient vocabulary to converse with the high school foreign language students.

High school and elementary school students were paired as video pen pals. The second project was the construction of a PowerPoint presentation with their high school pen pal.

The second project was the construction of a PowerPoint presentation with their high school pen pal. Students were paired with their pen pal for an hour at the elementary school. The students took digital pictures of their homes, pets, and families. The program's cameras were sent home with the student for two nights. (In order to have a camera sent home, the parents and students needed to attend a training session with the library media specialist and had to demonstrate proficiency in the use of the camera.) Students used their disks and pictures on their PowerPoint presentation. These presentations were shared with parents.

Because the basis for the vocabulary instruction was the classroom curriculum, and because classroom teachers were asked to incorporate the target language into their daily routine, it was important for classroom teachers to learn basic foreign vocabulary and conversation patterns. In the fall, a one-credit foreign language course for classroom teachers was offered through Marian College in Oconto Falls. (This was offered in lieu of the summer academy because the foreign language teacher was not employed by the district until the day before school began.) The grant paid the tuition for each participant who successfully completed the program.

Program Evaluation – Every student in the kindergarten and first grade at the Oconto Falls Elementary School and the Abrams Elementary School received foreign language instruction in either French or Spanish. Abrams (the smaller school) students received French instruction and the Oconto Falls Elementary School students received Spanish instruction. Kindergarten students were involved in direct, face-to-face instruction for twenty minutes, two days per week and the first grade students received direct, face-to-face instruction for twenty minutes, three days per week. The mode of instruction was aural/oral based on the classroom curriculum and the culture of the target language.

The pairing of high school and elementary students was beneficial for both sets of students. The students who were in their first or second year of learning the target language were amazed at the speed at which the elementary students could learn the language and use it automatically.

The technology component of this project generated tremendous enthusiasm on the part of students, teachers and parents. The pairing of high school and elementary students was beneficial for both sets of students. The students who were in their first or second year of learning the target language were amazed at the speed at which the elementary students could learn the language and use it automatically. The high school and elementary students formed a bond by working together through the pen pal program and the PowerPoint presentation.

Prior to the implementation of the foreign language program, parents were surveyed about offering their children a second language during the school day. The response indicated parent approval and their willingness to work with their children at home in the target language. Parents continued to be excited about the program and expressed satisfaction with the program. Most families attended the digital camera training. The district continued to offer the foreign language through the summer school program.

Participants in the one-credit course were informally surveyed about their use of the target language in their classrooms after completing the course. Teachers indicated that they were less reluctant to incorporate the target language into their daily routine. This was a highly successful offering with eighteen teachers, support staff, and aides successfully completing the program.

Content Evaluation – District performances were used to showcase the target language – singing in the target language at the concerts, completing art projects which are native to the target culture, and cooking foods common in the target country.

In order to increase the awareness of all students for the target language, the school's bulletin boards, classroom displays, and object labels were in both languages. Students in kindergarten and grade one participated in cultural activities throughout the year. During the "All Arts Day" at Oconto Falls Elementary and at Abrams, native dances were demonstrated by the foreign language instructor and then taught to the students.

Language Development – Throughout the program, the target language was evident in the schools. Elementary children learned to add and subtract in their foreign language and could converse with their high school "buddies." They demonstrated their language learning via their PowerPoint presentations and video pen pal letters.

Role of Technology – The Oconto Falls School District technology experienced some bumps in the road, which caused some bumps in the foreign language technology aspect of this program. The district implemented Citrix in the fall and this caused a delay in the operation of the computers and the software, which was planned for the program. Software was not able to be loaded onto the servers. That portion of the planned foreign language instruction was eventually dropped.

The unfortunate mishap with the Citrix system made way for an exciting, creative program utilizing non-traditional instructional technologies and partnerships. The use of digital video cameras and PowerPoint technologies allowed high school and elementary school-aged children to enhance their learning, not just of the foreign language, but of the power of relationships in learning. That makes this project one to pay attention to over the long term.

The use of technologies allowed high school and elementary school-aged children to enhance their learning, not just of the foreign language, but of the power of relationships in learning.

Plan for Sustainability – The grant money was used to provide resources that will help to sustain the program over time. Materials and books were purchased with library and grant funds and teachers purchased bilingual materials with their classroom budgets.

In future programs, the use of digital video and pairing of students would begin earlier in the year and would continue throughout the students' foreign language instruction from kindergarten through grade 12. This would also serve as a digital portfolio demonstrating the students' growth in their language acquisition.

The digital camera/PowerPoint program was very successful in involving parents in the program. In order to complete this project in a more timely manner, more cameras would need to be purchased. This would also allow the program to be continued each year of the students' instruction creating another form of assessment. Students learned to operate the computers and how to construct a PowerPoint presentation with the help of a high school foreign language mentor.

When asked if they would do it again, the project coordinator Candi Lehto replied, "I would replicate the whole program K-12! It was fabulous. This was an excellent program to bridge the gap between schools and learners."

Leadership on the part of the assistant superintendent and the foreign language teacher was an important contributor to the success of this project. With very little time and a lot of hard work they were able to build a firm foundation for sustainability. Because of the broad-based involvement of everyone from parents, to students, to teachers and

support personnel and building principals, Oconto Falls now has a good shot at institutionalizing this program. They have demonstrated that despite the initial frustrations with funding, staffing, and technology, they have the resiliency, flexibility, and creativity needed to design and deliver a powerful foreign language experience. And it can be done without jeopardizing other programs.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT:

The essential question of this component is, "Are children learning to communicate in the foreign language?" To identify key factors that influence the level of proficiency students can achieve, various program models were compared on the basis of the average levels of language proficiency achieved by students in the program. This yielded some tentative findings that will prove helpful to districts making decisions about how to design an elementary foreign language program.

To try to answer the essential question of how well children are learning to communicate in a new language, TEACH grant funds were used to train teachers in Wisconsin to use two instruments for evaluating the language learning of elementary students. These trained teachers carried out language assessment in four existing Wisconsin programs. The findings of these assessments are reported here, linking the frequency and length of the instruction to the language levels achieved.

Assessment Plan – To determine language development, two assessment tools were administered to students in 2nd and 5th grades. The Early Language Listening and Oral Proficiency Assessment (ELLOPA) from the Center for Applied Linguistics was used to gather data on the language proficiency of 2nd grade students. This assessment was administered in the Fall of 2001 and the Spring of 2002. The Simulated Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA), also from the Center for Applied Linguistics, was used to gather data on 5th grade students. The assessment was administered in Spring 2002.

Rating Scale – The assessment of language proficiency is based on the general descriptors developed for the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines--Speaking (1999). This scale is the basis for the oral proficiency interview (OPI) which is the most widely-recognized assessment of oral language proficiency. The four main levels are **novice** (able to communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists and phrases); **intermediate** (able to create with language, initiate, maintain and bring to a close simple conversations by asking and responding to simple questions); **advanced** (able to narrate and describe in past, present and future and deal effectively with an unanticipated complication); and **superior** (able to discuss topics extensively, support opinions and hypothesize; deal with a linguistically unfamiliar situation). (Swender) The assessments used in our studies of Wisconsin's elementary language programs focused on the Novice and Intermediate levels as adapted to reflect younger learners.

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Table 1: Rating Scale of the ELLOPA and SOPA (Center for Applied Linguistics)

Junior Novice-Low	Junior Novice-Mid	Junior Novice-High	Junior Intermediate-Low
ORAL FLUENCY			
– Produces isolated words and/or high frequency expressions such as *good morning* and *thank you*. – Tends to use native language almost exclusively.	– Uses a limited number of isolated words, two- to three-word phrases, and/or longer memorized expressions within predictable topic areas. – May attempt to create sentences, but is not successful. Uses gestures or native language to expand meaning when attempting to create with language. Long pauses are common	– Uses high-frequency expressions and other memorized expressions with reasonable ease. – Signs of originality are beginning to emerge. – Creates some sentences successfully, but is unable to sustain sentence-level speech.	– Maintains simple conversations at the sentence level by creating with the language although in a reactive, limited manner. – Handles a limited number of everyday social and academic interactions.
LANGUAGE CONTROL (GRAMMAR)			
– May use memorized, high–frequency phrases accurately. – Lacks an awareness of grammar and syntax.	– May use memorized expressions with verbs and other short phrases accurately, but inaccuracies are common. – Does not successfully create at the sentence level with conjugated verbs.	– Creates some sentences with conjugated verbs, but in other attempts to create sentences, verbs may be lacking or unconjugated. – Many grammatical inaccuracies are present.	– Verbs are conjugated in present tense, but may be inaccurate. – Other grammatical inaccuracies are present. – Begins to self–correct.
VOCABULARY (SPEAKING)			
– Uses words in very specific topic areas in predictable contexts. – May use a few memorized, high frequency expressions.	– Uses specific words in a limited number of topic areas, high–frequency expressions, and other memorized expressions. – Frequently searches for words.	– Uses vocabulary centering on basic objects, places, and family, adequate for minimally elaborating utterances in predictable topic areas. – May use native language or gestures when attempting to create with language.	– Has basic vocabulary for making statements and asking questions to satisfy basic social and academic needs, but cannot elaborate or provide explanations. – May use false cognates or resort to native language when attempting to communicate beyond the scope of familiar topics. – May use some common idiomatic expressions.
LISTENING COMPREHENSION			
– Recognizes isolated words and high–frequency expressions such as *hello, good morning, thank you*.	– Understands predictable questions, statements, and commands in familiar topic areas *with strong contextual support* (gestures, objects, visuals, or previously presented material) though at a slower than normal rate of speech and/or with repetitions.	– Understands simple questions, statements, and commands, some new sentences with strong contextual support, and simple narratives in familiar topic areas. May require repetition, slower speech, or rephrasing.	– Understands familiar and new sentence–level questions and commands in a limited number of content areas with strong contextual support for unfamiliar topics. – Follows conversation at a fairly normal rate.

Center for Applied Linguistics, 2001

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The following summary highlights the characteristics of the two levels seen in students in K-8 language programs. **Novice level** speakers can "respond to simple questions on the most common features of daily life; convey minimal meaning ... by using isolated words, lists of words, memorized phrases and some personalized recombinations of words and phrases; and satisfy a very limited number of immediate needs." **Intermediate level** speakers can "participate in simple, direct conversations on generally predictable topics related to daily activities and personal environment; create with the language and communicate personal meaning ... by combining language elements in discrete sentences and strings of sentences; obtain and give information by asking and answering questions; sustain and bring to a close a number of basic, uncomplicated communicative exchanges, often in a reactive mode; and satisfy simple personal needs and social demands to survive in the target language culture." (Breiner-Sanders, p. 18)

The greatest variable is time, with two components: the grade at which instruction begins, and the regular frequency of that instruction.

The rating scale of the ELLOPA and SOPA (Table 1) is broken down into the categories of oral fluency, language control (grammar), vocabulary (speaking), and listening comprehension. Reading left to right shows how young students develop increasing proficiency in four key components of using the target language.

Results – What can be expected from early instruction in another language? The greatest variable is time, with two components: the grade at which instruction begins, and the regular frequency of that instruction. In the programs assessed using these two instruments, instruction begins in either kindergarten or first grade. The frequency of instruction varies somewhat program to program as seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Foreign Language Instructional Model in Four Wisconsin Districts

School District	Instruction in Kindergarten	Instruction in First Grade	Instruction in Second Grade
Appleton (Spanish)	--	5 days/week; 30 min. class; **150 min./week (90 hours/year)**	5 days/week; 30 min. class; **150 min./week (90 hours/year)**
Ashwaubenon (German and Spanish)	5 days/week; 20 min. class; **100 min./week (60 hours/year)**	5 days/week; 20 min. class; **100 min./week (60 hours/year)**	4 days/week; 25 min. class; **100 min./week (60 hours/year)**
Madison (Midvale Elementary - Spanish)	Varied: 2-3 days/week; 30 min. class; **60-90 min./week (36-54 hours/yr.)**	Varied: 2-4 days/week; 30 min. class; **60-120 min./week (36-72 hours/yr.)**	Varied: 2-4 days/week; 30 min. class; **60-120 min./week (36-72 hours/yr.)**
Menasha (German, Japanese, and Spanish)	2 days/week; 20 min. class; **40 min./week (24 hours/year)**	3 days/week; 20 min. class; **60 min./week (36 hours/year)**	5 days/week; 20 min. class; **100 min./week (60 hours/year)**

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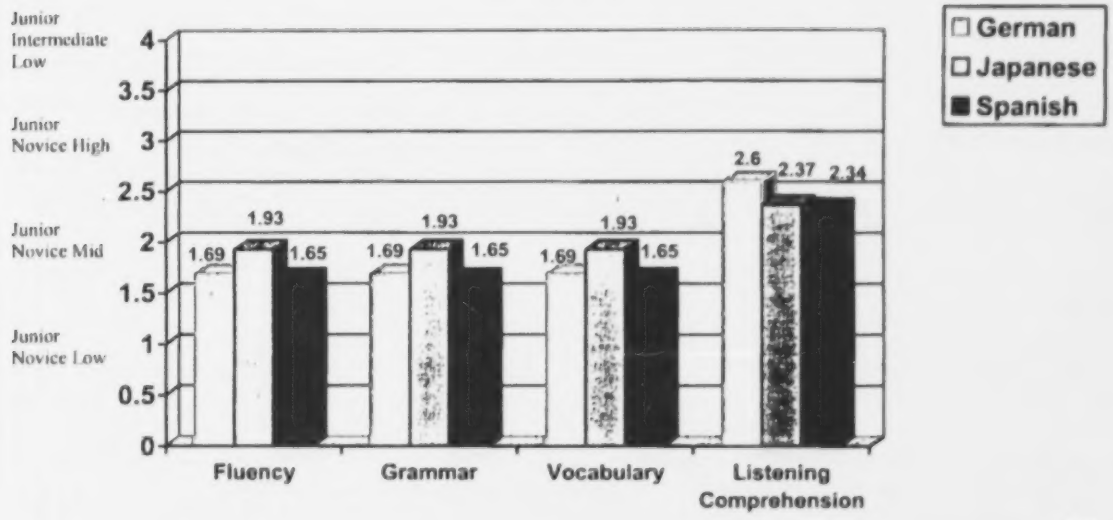
A general perception exists in the United States that some languages are easier to learn than others. This assessment showed that the language taught had no significant impact on the average scores of language proficiency achieved (see Table 3). German and Spanish were virtually identical in three categories of language assessed: fluency, grammar, and vocabulary. Compared with German and Spanish, Japanese students showed slightly higher scores in fluency, grammar, and vocabulary, but all three averaged in the upper half of Junior Novice Low. For listening comprehension, German students showed slightly higher scores compared to Japanese and Spanish students, but all three language groups were in the Junior Novice Mid range. Since only minor differences appeared, this fluctuation is more likely due to differences in the program models (see Table 2) or teaching styles than to any innate ease or difficulty of learning a particular language.

Wisconsin fifth grade students from Menasha scored very similarly (only slightly lower) compared to students from a program outside Wisconsin that provides daily instruction for 30 minutes each day, from kindergarten through fifth grade. Both groups of students averaged in the Junior Novice Mid range for fluency, grammar, and vocabulary; both groups averaged in the Junior Novice High range for listening comprehension (see Table 4). Menasha students have had a total of 360 hours of instruction by the end of fifth grade as the length of the class period and the frequency of instruction increases from kindergarten through fifth grade. This compares to a total of 540 hours of instruction for the other students, who had 30 minutes daily since kindergarten.

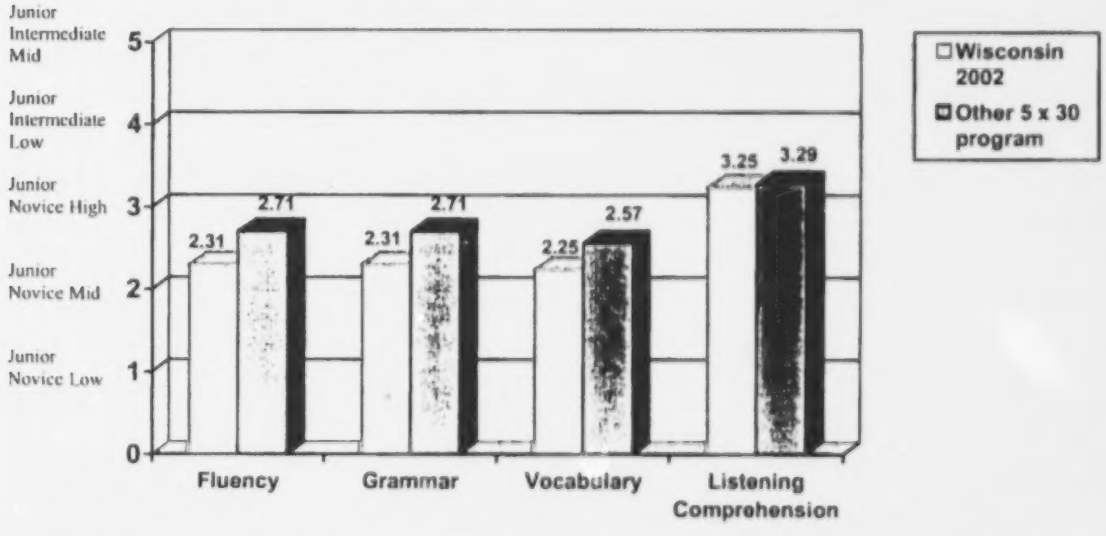
Another overall finding is that listening comprehension is consistently higher than the other components of fluency, grammar, and vocabulary (see tables 3 and 4). This confirms what we know from other studies of language learning and underscores the importance of the receptive phase where beginning students need time to listen, read, or watch, with the target language presented in meaningful contexts. This is especially important to keep in mind when examining assessment results for oral language proficiency from programs that are based on grade level content. When students are learning social studies, science, math, or other subject area content through the world language, class instruction provides a great deal of input made comprehensible through graphic organizers, illustrations, acting out, gestures, and simple either/or comprehension checks. These develop listening comprehension but not oral production skills, which will make such content-related programs appear to be less successful in developing proficiency in the target language. Students in content-related programs develop a depth of vocabulary, language patterns, and curriculum content which unfortunately is not assessed by general assessments of language proficiency such as the ELLOPA or SOPA.

Table 3: Comparison of Second Graders by Language



Note: Data is from the Early Language Listening and Oral Proficiency Assessment (ELLOPA) administered in December 2001 to second grade students in Appleton, Ashwaubenon, and Menasha.

Table 4: Comparison of Fifth Graders



Note: Data is from the Simulated Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA). Wisconsin data is from end of the year testing (May 2002). Students generally have been in the program since kindergarten, moving from 40 minutes of instruction per week in kindergarten to 150 minutes of instruction per week in grade 5. The other program provides daily instruction of 30 minutes in length, from kindergarten through grade 5. Only students who had been in the program since kindergarten were included in the testing of that program.

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The Early Language Listening and Oral Proficiency Assessment (ELLOPA) adapts in limited ways to the curriculum taught in each particular elementary world language program tested. The assessment opens with generic social talk (how are you? what day is it?). Then students open a magic bag and pull out the objects inside and point to various items as prompted by the interviewer. Next students are asked to place the objects on a picture board (farm, house, or city) and to take a turn at asking the interviewer to do the same. As a break, students are asked to sing a song in the target language with which they are familiar. The final task is to talk with Mrs. Cow, answering various questions on personal information (family, school, birthday, favorite food). A wind-down activity concludes the assessment, such as asking students to point to body parts or spell their name depending on the program's curriculum. For programs that focus instructional units on social studies or science content, these tasks and topics are unfamiliar to the students. This fact needs to be taken into consideration when comparing schools and examining the results of the ELLOPA testing.

The frequency of instruction per week and over the course of the year has more of an impact on the level of language proficiency students achieve than whether they started in kindergarten or first grade.

A key element for building students' language proficiency is the regular frequency of the instruction. The frequency of instruction per week and over the course of the year has more of an impact on the level of language proficiency students achieve than whether they started in kindergarten or first grade. A comparison of second grade students in three different program models suggests this conclusion, but lacking control for other variables, such as students' background or the type of instruction, we cannot be conclusive. Table 5 shows the scores from three models of instruction (See Table 2) with the following differences in the number of hours of regular instruction: by the time the testing of second grade students occurred in December 2001, week 14 of the school year, Menasha students had received 84 hours of instruction since kindergarten; Appleton students had 125 hours of daily instruction since first grade; and Ashwaubenon students had 144 hours of instruction since kindergarten. In general, the number of hours of

Table 5: Scores from Three Different Models of Instruction

School District	Fluency	Grammar	Vocabulary	Listening Comprehension	Total Hours & Grade of Instruction
Menasha A (n=38)	1.61	1.61	1.61	2.00	
Menasha B (n=12)	1.67	1.67	1.67	2.58	
Menasha Dist. Average (n=50)	**1.62**	**1.62**	**1.62**	**2.14**	**84 hours (K-2)**
Appleton A (n=12)	1.33	1.33	1.33	2.00	
Appleton B (n=18)	1.83	1.83	1.83	2.56	
Appleton Dist. Average (n=30)	**1.63**	**1.63**	**1.63**	**2.33**	**125 hours (1-2)**
Ashwaubenon Dist. Average (n=16)	**1.83**	**1.83**	**1.83**	**2.56**	**144 hours (K-2)**

Second Grade Students - December 2001 - ELLOPA Scores

instruction accounted for the ranking of scores. Appleton and Menasha students were very similar in the proficiency showed in language they produced (fluency, grammar, and vocabulary), but Appleton students were stronger in listening comprehension, a receptive skill. The students with the most years and regularity of instruction -- Ashwaubenon, with four or five days a week over three years -- showed the highest level of proficiency in all areas, again with listening comprehension being the strongest skill. This reinforces our understanding of the language learning process: listening (receptive) skills develop faster than productive language skills at beginning levels. These findings should be compared with other program models to draw more definitive conclusions.

Another important factor to keep in mind when comparing programs is how long each has been in place. Teachers fine-tune their instruction each year, keeping what is effective and discarding what has less impact on student achievement. Menasha has had its elementary language program in place since 1993; Ashwaubenon since 1997. Both had many years of experience teaching languages to second graders by the time of the ELLOPA testing. In contrast, Appleton B began in the 1999-2000 school year and Appleton A in January 2000. Therefore the ELLOPA testing in December 2001 was after only four semesters of instruction for Appleton A students, but after five semesters for Appleton B students (25% longer). For both Appleton schools it was during only the second year of teaching second grade students.

Table 6: Scores from Two Different Models of Instruction

District	Fluency	Grammar	Vocabulary	Listening Comprehension
Madison	1.42	1.42	1.42	2.17
Appleton	1.88	1.88	1.88	2.38

Second Grade Students - May 2002 - ELLOPA Scores

To get another sense of the impact of different models of instruction, a comparison of the May 2002 second-grade students' scores between Madison-Midvale and Appleton's three elementary schools is informative (see Table 6). The difference in time toward proficiency at Madison-Midvale ranges from 108 total hours by the end of grade two to 198 total hours possible (see Table 2) though any single student was unlikely to have always been in the classrooms that received the maximum number of hours of instruction. This compares to Appleton's 180 total hours of instruction by the end of grade two. Madison's students generally had less instructional time compared to Appleton's students. Table 6 shows the impact of Appleton's daily 30 minute model compared to Madison's 30 minute but less frequent instruction. While the number of students is small (Madison = 6;

Appleton = 24), the trend suggests that the difference of starting in kindergarten vs. first grade is less a factor toward developing language proficiency than the regular frequency of the instruction. Thirty minutes of daily instruction continued throughout the year seems to have more impact than starting in kindergarten rather than first grade. Further study is needed to confirm this trend.

What can we learn from these assessment results?

First, these results need to be interpreted broadly and not as definitive research. The data may suggest trends, but the evidence is based on small samples from very different programs. Our interpretation was done with a great deal of care not to make unfounded, generalized conclusions. With that caution in mind, some important findings did surface:

A key factor to increase language proficiency is regular and frequent instruction.

- a key factor to increase language proficiency is regular and frequent instruction. Daily instruction of 30 minutes in length will strongly impact students' proficiency in the target language.
- the language taught does not show significant differences in how students perform, debunking the myth that Spanish is the easier language to learn and Japanese must surely be difficult to learn.
- a frequent and regular program of instruction is likely to have more impact on students' foreign language proficiency than beginning language instruction one grade earlier with less instructional contact.

Given the imperfections in any assessment, the good to be gained is in making teachers more reflective. Assessments of language proficiency can help teachers monitor the progress of their students and reflect on their own instructional strategies. In this way, teachers can focus their instruction to improve their students' proficiency in using the target language.

The results of the language assessment component of this TEACH project will provide useful insights for school districts planning and designing world language programs for students in elementary grades

VI. GENERAL FINDINGS

What follows is a set of "lessons learned." It is a synthesis of the patterns of successes and struggles that TEACH Grant FLES participants have shared with the Support and Evaluation Team throughout the year. Section VII is a parallel set of recommendations based on these findings.

A. Holistic Approach

When children, parents, and staff see and hear the foreign language in every corner of the school, inside and outside of the classroom, and being spoken by more than just the foreign language teacher, learning, enthusiasm, and retention are enhanced. Staff members and parents can have a significant impact on the children's language learning when they use the target language or refer to lessons being taught in the language classes. Integration thus takes place, creating a more meaningful learning experience for all students.

B. Classroom Teachers

The presence of the classroom teacher as a learner, mentor, and support person makes a significant difference. The classroom teacher becomes a conduit to connect the content of the regular classroom curriculum with the content of the language instruction. The classroom teacher is a role model as well: by helping with the language class and learning along with the students, the teacher models the importance of learning another language. The classroom teacher sees what the children are learning and can reinforce those concepts throughout the day. This integrates the foreign language instruction with the other subject areas taught.

The presence of the classroom teacher as a learner, mentor, and support person makes a significant difference.

C. Distance Learning

Distance learning provides opportunities for children to learn a foreign language where there may not otherwise be any foreign language experience or where a particular language may not be available. However, for young children the optimum learning situation still involves the physical presence of a skillful, caring teacher. The challenge is how to create a communicative classroom through the distance learning technology.

Several factors impact the effectiveness of distance learning:

1. **Collaboration between the sending and receiving teachers** is a crucial element for success. This involves collaborative curriculum planning, follow-through in the receiving environment, reinforcement of new learning, scheduling, and learning

from each other what is working or not working in the distance environment. Again, the classroom teacher's presence and active participation in the language classes proves critical.

2. **Compatibility of systems for transmitting and receiving** is a must. Where one complete and compatible system was used the transmission was clearer, faster, and therefore more effective. There is less down time and less need for technical support to "fix" things. There is also far less frustration.

3. **Scheduling** needs to be a priority. Districts need to set aside blocks of time specifically for instruction and planning. Children (and teachers) should not be asked to give up their lunch time or free time to learn a foreign language just because that is when the equipment or room is available. Scheduling language instruction outside of the regular academic day sends the message that learning another language is an extra and nonessential part of the curriculum, rather than a critical skill for students in the 21st century.

Scheduling language instruction outside of the regular academic day sends the message that learning another language is an extra and nonessential part of the curriculum, rather than a critical skill for students in the 21st century.

4. **On-site technical support** helps to take at least one burden off the teacher and helps to keep things moving along so that limited time is spent waiting for set-up or adjustments. Then the teacher can put her energy into delivering highly interactive instruction.

5. **Teacher's comfort and experience with the equipment** is critical. The more comfortable and experienced the teacher is with using the distance technology equipment, the more seamless his/her teaching can be. The technology becomes invisible when a great FLES teacher is skilled in making it work for him/her.

D. Time

No teacher can possibly sustain over the long haul the workloads we observed the FLES teachers manage in this project. The multiplicity of requirements, relationships, tasks, and teaching duties they perform is overwhelming. Burnout is inevitable if time is not built into these teachers' days for lunch, preparation, and reflection. Teaching in the elementary grades means that the teacher needs at least five different activities in each class period to teach and reinforce the language. Each transition from one class to another thus requires time to make the visuals and manipulatives ready for their next use. When a single teacher is responsible for an entire school, the daily number of different preparations and transitions on top of the sheer number of students instructed can be almost impossible to manage.

Time is also needed for collaboration with classroom teachers to align and develop curriculum, to contact and work with parents, to plan cultural events, and for their own professional development.

Instructional time is a critical component of success. Retention of learning is facilitated when instructional time is age appropriate and continuous over time vs. longer sessions delivered periodically or randomly. Programs should work toward daily instruction of not less than twenty minutes per session. The closer a program comes to this goal, the better the retention.

Programs should work toward daily instruction of not less than twenty minutes per session. The closer a program comes to this goal, the better the retention.

E. Start Small

Where the projects were designed to be targeted, simple, and smaller in scope, there was less frustration and more success at getting the design implemented as planned. Make the pilot doable, learn from it, and then expand. Success came from keeping the vision in mind from the beginning and making the critical decisions to "grow" the program over time. Building a program piece by piece works when the decision makers know where the program is going. Start small, but focus on a vision for the future.

F. Professional Development

Professional development for everyone in the school as well as the parents and community members helps to create confidence and support for continuation of the program.

G. Logistics

The logistics of moving carts up and down stairways and in and out of classrooms decrease the amount of time for instruction, are distracting to the learning environment and are physically demanding on teachers. A quiet, designated space or equipment that can remain in the regular classroom is preferable.

H. Sustainability

Leadership support at every phase of the project is essential. Support in the form of time, resources, communication, setting expectations and modeling all go a long way to assure teachers and students alike that this program is important.

Leadership support at every phase of the project is essential.

A new initiative supported with external resources is often tempting but when it comes to fully implementing and sustaining that program after the external source is gone, difficult decisions will need to be made. Time and material resources are ongoing needs. This is where the district as a whole must embrace the initiative and where leader-

ship becomes so vital. If ongoing funding is not provided, even the most gifted and energetic teacher will ultimately become worn out and the program less effective.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Holistic approach:

Language instruction should match the instructional strategies that honor how young students learn, which in elementary grades means through experiences and frequent reinforcement. Young students are eager to learn and use a new language, and therefore students need to be engaged through all learning modalities: dancing, singing, eating, tasting, touching, smelling, and mimicking. Capitalizing on this window of opportunity, language development is enhanced when the language curriculum connects with the regular grade level curriculum. The learning is worthwhile and will endure.

B. Classroom teachers:

In order to create a valued place in the school day, collaboration with the classroom teacher is a must. The curriculum needs to connect with what students need to learn at that grade level - numbers and colors are not the ends in themselves, but merely one vehicle to learn math and science. Therefore the curriculum needs to be negotiated with the classroom teacher. Planning time is essential. The importance of learning a second language is powerfully reinforced when the classroom teacher models by learning along side her students.

The curriculum needs to connect with what students need to learn at that grade level. The importance of learning a second language is powerfully reinforced when the classroom teacher models by learning along side her students.

C. Distance learning:

To assure communicative interaction - essential for language learning - class size is an important consideration in distance learning. With multiple sites, the total number of students should not exceed what would normally be expected in a regular classroom, e.g., 25 students could be spread among five sites, but 5 sites with 25 students each would force the learning to be only a receiving of information and not a practicing of communication.

D. Schedule:

Frequency and continuity are key factors for retention in language learning. Programs that provide a minimum of 30 minutes of instruction three times per week show progress in developing language proficiency. Daily instruction develops increased proficiency in using the target language. Especially at beginning levels, as with any skill, continuity over the school year is critical. If only occasional units of language instruction can be provided, some follow-up activities or experiences over the course of the year will help maintain students' skills. Periodic or random instruction will not produce proficient language users.

Frequency and continuity are key factors for retention in language learning. Daily instruction develops increased proficiency in using the target language.

E. Program Development:

A good model is to start with one grade level and then grow the program by adding the next grade each year as students move through the program.

F. Professional Development:

Language teachers need an understanding of the elementary curriculum, skills in utilizing various technologies, and attention to the strategies needed for teaching younger learners.

Classroom teachers and support staff need time to work with the language teacher to adapt curriculum and to understand how kids learn a language connected to their regular curriculum

Classroom teachers and support staff need some training in the target language. This will help them be comfortable learning from their students and help them reinforce their students' language learning. The classroom teachers and support staff also need time to work with the language teacher to adapt curriculum and to understand how kids learn a language connected to their regular curriculum (one approach could be through visits with classroom teachers in established programs).

Parents have an interest in language learning too, but need assurance that this program will enhance their child's learning in a variety of ways. Providing instruction in a few useful phrases and how to practice with their child at home will create comfort and support.

G. Classroom:

Part of the language learning experience is immersion in another culture. A classroom decorated to enhance language learning helps create that immersion. Students need to feel that literally they are entering another culture as they learn a new language. As much as possible, everything they see, hear, read, view, and experience should be in the target language and representative of the target culture. The balance of images of another culture displayed in a classroom also helps to counteract students' stereotypical images of that culture. This may be achieved by designating a classroom specifically for language learning or by creating a language and culture corner in the regular classroom. The advantage of the language teacher coming into the regular classroom is that students do not waste time moving from class to class and the language teacher can involve the classroom teacher to model the learning and both witness and help create the integration of language learning with the curriculum of other subject areas.

H. Commitment:

An elementary foreign language program has the potential to positively impact every student in the school.

An elementary foreign language program has the potential to positively impact every student in the school. Not only are students beginning to learn a useful skill, they are exploring literacy from a new perspective, they are developing attitudes about others by experiencing new cultures, and through their own second language learning they have an appreciation for students learning English. All staff, admini-

stration, and board members need to commit to supporting the foreign language program over time. This includes providing time to co-create, collaborate, and partake in professional development on designing the curriculum; scheduling classrooms and teachers needed to provide the best environment for learning; and providing technology resources and support.

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